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Nearer Neighbors: Unitarian Universalism, Liberal Protestantism, and Eclectic Faith-assembly

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Oral Presentation O9.2

**SEARCHING FOR TRUTH IN THE SECULAR AGE: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM,
ECLECTICISM, AND SECULAR SPIRITUALITY IN MODERNITY**

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Unitarian Universalism (UUism), the product of unification between the two sects in the 1960s, owes much to its 19th century provenance among various sects of liberal Protestantism. Additionally, its development paralleled the accelerating phenomenon of secularism in the modern West, which framed the environment in which it distilled its values. In my paper I describe Unitarianism's differences and similarities with 19th century Protestantism, the common threads of secularism carried through Unitarianism and Universalism's developments, and modern UUism's approach to questions of faith and religious truth. I also address the mode of eclecticism that UUism employs in its interactions with other religious traditions, and discuss some of the dangers inherent in this process. Finally, I address the question of whether and to what extent Unitarian Universalism embodies a quintessentially secular liberal faith.